

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 179679
ORIGIN NODS-00

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /001 R

66011

DRAFTED BY: NEA:AKORKY
APPROVED BY: NEA:AKORKY
S/S-O:LFLEISCHER

-----057920 171423Z /46

O 171358Z JUL 78 ZFF5
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE 0000

S E C R E T STATE 179679

NODIS
FOR ATHERTON AND SAUNDERS

FOLLOWING REPEAT CAIRO 17125 SENT ACTION SECSTATE, TEL
AVIV 15 JUL 78

QUOTE S E C R E T CAIRO 17125

EXDIS DISTRIBUTE AS NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV EG IS
SUBJECT: LONDON TALKS--EGYPTIAN REACTION TO OUR
- PROPOSED SCENARIO

REF: (A) CAIRO 17108 (B) STATE 178741

1. AS SUGGESTED REF A, WHILE EGYPTIANS CONSIDER OUR
PROPOSED SCENARIO GENERALLY AGREEABLE, THEY DO HAVE
SOME RESERVATIONS.

2. FINAL STATEMENT AND AL-ARISH MEETING: ON FLIGHT TO
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ALEXANDRIA THIS MORNING, FONMIN KAMEL EXPRESSED STRONG
RESERVATIONS ABOUT OUR PROPOSED FINAL STATEMENT. HE DID
NOT WANT TO AGREE IN ADVANCE TO THE CONCEPT OF A STATE-
MENT DESCRIBING THE TALKS AS USEFUL WHEN IT HAS NOT YET
BEEN DEMONSTRATED THAT THEY WILL BE SO. MORE PARTICU-
LARLY, HE OBJECTED TO THE IDEA OF ANNOUNCING ANOTHER
MEETING AT AL-ARISH AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE LONDON

TALKS. HE ARGUED THAT SADAT'S SUGGESTION OF AN AL-ARISH VENUE WAS AS A SUBSTITUTE FOR LONDON RATHER THAN AS A LOCATION FOR FOLLOW-UP TALKS. WHAT PARTICULARLY ANNOYED HIM WAS THE FACT THAT DAYAN, EVEN BEFORE THE LONDON TALKS HAVE TAKEN PLACE, HAS ALREADY ANNOUNCED THAT FURTHER TALKS WILL TAKE PLACE AT AL-ARISH. KAMEL SAW THIS AS EVIDENCE THAT DAYAN'S PRINCIPAL INTEREST IS SHOWMANSHIP RATHER THAN SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS. HE ALSO NOTED THAT CBS HAD CARRIED THE NEWS CITING USG SOURCES. IN THIS CONNECTION, HE HAD HEARD OF SAUNDER'S BACKGROUND BRIEFING AND EXPRESSED UNHAPPINESS THAT WE, TOO, SHOULD BE TALKING ABOUT AN AL-ARISH MEETING BEFORE EGYPTIAN REACTIONS TO OUR PROPOSED SCENARIO HAD BEEN OBTAINED.

3. I TOLD KAMEL THAT WE, TOO, REGRET THAT DAYAN FELT IT NECESSARY TO TALK ABOUT AN AL-ARISH FOLLOW-ON MEETING BEFORE ALL SIDES HAD AGREED. SAUNDER'S BACKGROUND BRIEFING HAD ONLY CONFIRMED WHAT ISRAELIS ALREADY HAD ANNOUNCED. I HAD TO TELL HIM, HOWEVER, THAT MY IMPRESSION OF SADAT'S VIEWS WAS SOMEWHAT DIFFERENT FROM HIS. IN THE SEVERAL TIMES WHEN SADAT HAS SPOKEN TO ME ABOUT AN AL-ARISH MEETING SITE, IT HAD NOT ONLY BEEN IN THE CONTEXT OF A SUBSTITUTE TO LONDON, BUT ALSO AS A POSSIBLE SITE FOR FOLLOW-ON TALKS WHENEVER THESE MIGHT TAKE PLACE. I AGAIN EXPLAINED WHY WE FEEL FOLLOW-ON TALKS ARE NECESSARY. ALTHOUGH VP MUBARAK SIDED
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WITH ME, KAMEL REMAINED UNCONVINCED AND WE DECIDED MATTER WOULD HAVE TO BE DECIDED BY SADAT.

4. IN COURSE OF LONG TALK WITH SADAT (WITH MUBARAK AND KAMEL PRESENT), IN WHICH THE PRESIDENT SPOKE AT LENGTH OF HIS TALKS IN AUSTRIA (SEPTTEL), I ASKED FOR HIS VIEWS ON OUR PROPOSED SCENARIO. SADAT ALSO SAID HE DID NOT WANT A STATEMENT AT THE END OF THE LONDON TALKS SAYING THAT A FOLLOW-ON MEETING AT AL-ARISH HAS BEEN DECIDED UPON. HIS REASON FOR OBJECTING TO SUCH A STATEMENT WAS DIFFERENT FROM KAMEL'S. SADAT EXPECTS WEIZMAN IN ALEXANDRIA SHORTLY AFTER THE LONDON TALKS AND DOES NOT WANT TO SAY ANYTHING ABOUT A FOLLOW-ON MEETING AT AL-ARISH UNTIL HE HAS FURTHER TALKS WITH WEIZMAN. IF A "NEW ELEMENT" IS ADDED BY THE ISRAELIS, EITHER AT LONDON OR WHEN WEIZMAN RETURNS, THEN AN ANNOUNCEMENT CAN BE MADE OF A FOLLOW-ON AL-ARISH MEETING. IN ANY CASE, SADAT SAID THAT HE HAS NO CONFIDENCE IN DAYAN AND WANTS TO NEGOTIATE SERIOUS MATTERS WITH WEIZMAN.

5. I AGAIN POINTED OUT WHY WE BELIEVE A FOLLOW-ON MEETING IS NEEDED AND SADAT DID NOT DEMUR. SADAT SIMPLY

REITERATED THAT GOE DOES NOT WANT AN ANNOUNCEMENT OUT OF LONDON TO THAT EFFECT UNLESS THE LONDON TALKS REALLY PROVE USEFUL. HE DID AGREE THAT SOMETHING MIGHT BE SAID TO THE EFFECT THAT THE POSSIBILITY OF A FOLLOW-ON MEETING WOULD BE STUDIED AND, IN MY PRESENCE, SAID KAMEL WOULD HAVE FLEXIBILITY IN TALK WITH DAYAN. I NOTED THAT WE ATTACH CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO A FOLLOW-ON MEETING AND SAID THAT THE SECRETARY WILL DOUBTLESS WANT TO TAKE IT UP AGAIN WITH KAMEL TO URGE RECONSIDERATION OF THE EGYPTIAN POSITION. SADAT LEFT IT THAT THE SECRETARY AND KAMEL COULD DISCUSS THE MATTER IN THE LIGHT OF HOW THE TALKS PROGRESS.

6. SADAT'S PREFERENCE FOR WEIZMAN AS NEGOTIATOR: FROM
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SADAT'S LONG ACCOUNT OF HIS TALK WITH WEIZMAN, IT WAS OBVIOUS THAT MANY OF THE POINTS COVERED WILL ALSO COME UP IN LONDON TALKS, E.G., IS SADAT PREPARED TO NEGOTIATE A WEST BANK/GAZA AGREEMENT IF HUSSEIN REFUSES TO DO SO, RECTIFICATION OF WEST BANK BORDERS, ETC. I THEREFORE ASKED SADAT WHETHER KAMEL WILL BE ABLE TO GIVE DAYAN THE SAME ANSWERS THAT SADAT GAVE TO WEIZMAN ON THESE QUESTIONS. SADAT'S RESPONSE WAS THAT KAMEL SHOULD, IF DAYAN ASKS THESE QUESTIONS, REPLY WITH A COUNTER QUESTION. FOR EXAMPLE, IF DAYAN ASKS ABOUT EGYPTIAN WILLINGNESS TO CONCLUDE A WEST BANK/GAZA AGREEMENT, KAMEL SHOULD SAY THAT IT DEPENDS UPON SATISFACTORY ISRAELI RESPONSES TO OUR TWO QUESTIONS ON THE FUTURE OF THE WEST BANK AND GAZA. SADAT REITERATED HIS DESIRE TO CONDUCT SERIOUS NEGOTIATIONS ONLY THROUGH WEIZMAN, NOT DAYAN.

7. BILATERAL TALKS AND FOCUS OF LONDON TALKS: NEITHER SADAT NOR KAMEL HAVE ANY OBJECTION TO BILATERAL TALKS, BUT KAMEL MADE IT VERY CLEAR THAT HE WILL NOT ASK FOR A MEETING WITH DAYAN. KAMEL ALSO THOUGHT THAT MEETING SHOULD FOCUS ON WEST BANK/GAZA AND NOT SO MUCH ON DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES. IN THIS CONNECTION, KAMEL REITERATED POINT MAHER HAD EARLIER MADE TO ME, I.E., GOE OBJECTS TO HAVING ITS WEST BANK/GAZA COUNTERPROPOSAL DISCUSSED FIRST. THE BEGIN PLAN HAD BEEN THE FIRST TO BE TABLED; HENCE, KAMEL ARGUED IT SHOULD BE THE FIRST TO BE DISCUSSED. HE SAID GOE FEELS QUITE STRONGLY ABOUT THIS.

8. FIRST DAY SCHEDULE: PROPOSED SCHEDULE FOR FIRST DAY (REF B) IS AGREEABLE TO KAMEL.

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9. I AGAIN URGED KAMEL TO APPROACH THE LONDON TALKS IN A POSITIVE FASHION. KAMEL ASSURED ME THAT THIS IS HIS INTENTION, BUT SAID HE DOUBTS THAT DAYAN WILL DO SO. DAYAN'S MAIN CONCERN, HE REITERATED, WILL BE TO SCORE PUBLIC RELATIONS POINTS. I TOLD HIM THAT OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT DAYAN WILL APPROACH TALKS SERIOUSLY. KAMEL'S ONLY COMMENT WAS THAT HE HOPED SO, BUT HE AGAIN POINTED TO DAYAN'S ACTION IN ANNOUNCING RESULTS OF LONDON TALKS BEFORE THEY HAD EVEN TAKEN PLACE. EILTS

UNQUOTE CHRISTOPHER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CAT-B, GOVERNMENT REACTIONS, PEACE PLANS, NEGOTIATIONS, FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETINGS, DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIONS, PLANNING MEETINGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 jul 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE179679
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: NEA:AKORKY
Enclosure: REPEAT CAIRO 17125
Executive Order: GS
Errors: n/a
Expiration:
Film Number: N780006-0303
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 2
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780752/aaaabrlj.tel
Line Count: 187
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 11e37f72-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN NODS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: NODIS
Reference: 78 CAIRO 17108, 78 STATE 178741
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1985078
Secure: LOCK1
Status: <DBA CHANGED> MCM 20040610
Subject: LONDON TALKS--EGYPTIAN REACTION TO OUR - PROPOSED SCENARIO
TAGS: PBOR, PEPR, PGOV, IS, EG, UK, US
To: LONDON
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbcc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/11e37f72-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014